



**USARPAC**  
**News Release**  
**USARPAC Public Affairs**  
**Ft. Shafter, HI 96858-5100**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Release 025-07**  
**July 23, 2007**

## **Wolfhounds host Japanese orphans to Hawaii for 50<sup>th</sup> year**

By Kevin Downey, U.S. Army Pacific, Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Following a tradition older than many who were present at the emotion-filled ceremony here July 20, Wolfhounds of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment enthusiastically welcomed four orphans from Japan's Holy Family Home to Hawaii for their annual visit.

Six Wolfhound families will take turns hosting the orphans for a week as part of a custom started 50 years ago.

The awe-struck children, two girls and two boys ages 10 to 12, were greeted by an excited crowd of Soldiers, family members and civic leaders upon their arrival in the historic D Quad.

Brothers Seiya and Hayato Nishida, and girls Misaki Takenaka and Miho Tanaka, arrived to their welcoming celebration in two Army High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVS), before walking down a red carpet through a ceremonial cordon and being draped in lei.

“The purpose of this event is to continue the established traditions of providing love, gentleness, care and compassion to the orphans of the Holy Family Home,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 27 Infantry Regiment Commander Lt. Col. Rich “Flip” Wilson, one of the event organizers.

Squad leader Staff Sgt. Jesus Robles, who along with wife, Yamyra, will be caring for the girls the first two days, said their main goal is to make these children feel like they're part of a family.

"We have three kids of our own who are really eager to meet the girls," he said. "We're all excited to have these girls as part of our household."

"We'll treat them like ... our own, and show them lots of affection," Yamyra added.

As introductions were made, the Robles' son Joshua hugged the girls after draping them with leis.

To complete the tradition, each December two Wolfhound Soldiers visit the home in Japan to act as "Father Christmas," delivering the regiment's gifts to the children.

Though this year's visit marked the tradition's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the relationship between Soldiers of the 27 Infantry Regiment's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions and the orphanage extends to when then-Sgt. Hugh F.X. O'Reilly first visited the once-dilapidated home during occupation duty in Japan after WWII.

O'Reilly witnessed the poor conditions in which the orphans lived during a Christmas party visit in 1949 and started a collection for the home among his fellow Wolfhounds. The home operated with minimal funds while trying to accommodate the many children in Osaka who lost parents during the war.

The generosity of O'Reilly and his fellow Wolfhounds were depicted in a 1955 movie, "Three Stripes in the Sun."

The Wolfhounds' collections continued after the unit deployed to Korea during the war there in the 1950s. Soldiers crawled around foxholes in a combat zone to raise money for

the orphans, according to Charles Aresto, one of the original Wolfhounds involved in starting the collections.

That dedication continues to this day because of the compassion and pride shared by generations of the regiment's Soldiers throughout the years, he said.

"There are all kinds of regiments in the United States Army with tremendous combat records," the retired 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. said, squaring his line of vision. "But how many can say they've saved an orphanage?"

"Only one," he answered.

#### WOLFHOUND-ORPHANAGE CUTLINES

##### HFH4\_27IR

Pfc. Luis Barrionuevo lifts eleven-year-old Misaki Takenaka out of a Stryker vehicle after the orphans' welcoming ceremony on Schofield Barracks' D Quad July 20. (U.S. Army, Pacific photo by Kevin Downey.)

##### HFH1\_27IR

Misaki Takenaka (left) and Miho Tanaka are covered to their ears in flower and candy leis at their welcoming ceremony July 20 at Schofield Barracks' D Quad. (U.S. Army, Pacific photo by Kevin Downey.)

##### HFH2\_27IR

Sgt. Mark Davenport helps 10-year-old Hayato Nishida climb out of a Stryker vehicle July 20 on Schofield Barracks' D Quad after the orphans' welcoming ceremony. (U.S. Army, Pacific photo by Kevin Downey.)